

West Bank land prices drop

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — West Bank land prices, which soared last year when the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) signed an autonomy accord, have fallen along with once-high hopes of quick implementation of the agreement, a Palestinian newspaper said on Monday. Al Quds quoted Palestinian estate agents as saying prices have dropped by some 30 per cent from September, when the world watched Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shake hands, but are still up on a year ago. Commercial land in the town of Ramallah which rocketed from JD 150 per square metre to JD 250 after the agreement now fetches about JD 200. Land in well-to-do neighbourhoods around the town jumped but now averages about JD 70, the newspaper said. Estate agents say prices in Nablus and other West Bank towns have followed the same pattern as initial high expectations from the peace agreement have been dampened by snags in talks and a delay in the implementation of Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

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London protesters seek Arad release

LONDON (AP) — Hundreds of demonstrators gathered opposite the Iranian embassy on Sunday to protest the capture of an Israeli navigator whose plane was shot down over Lebanon in 1986. Israel says he may be alive and in the hands of Iranian Revolutionary guards, based in east Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. "The fate of Ron Arad must not be forgotten during these vital days of Middle East peace talks," said organiser Joyce Simon. "We've got to remind people that he's still there." The crowd released 2,647 balloons — one for each day of Arad's captivity, she said.

Italy may delay polls

ROME (R) — The Italian government said on Monday it could extend voting in landmark general elections on March 27 to March 28 to try to overcome Jewish objections that the polls will coincide with the Passover holiday. An official statement said Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi had contacted the speakers of the two houses of parliament and that the government was "ready to draft urgent legislative measures" that would allow observant Jews to vote.

Zhirinovsky sidelined in nominations

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian parliamentary leaders have blocked ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky from heading the influential foreign affairs commission, a position which he had wanted, handing him instead the chairmanship of a newly-created "geopolitical" commission. It was not immediately clear what the geopolitical commission would do. Mr. Zhirinovsky and fellow members of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), who took the second largest number of seats in the lower house of parliament, also failed to get the key security and defence parliamentary chairmanships.

2 neo-Nazis for jailed attack on U.S. team

SUHL, Germany (AFP) — Two neo-Nazi youths were jailed Monday for a racist attack on members of the U.S.-luge (toboggan) Olympic team at Oberhofen in eastern Germany last October that caused international outrage. Silvio Eschrich, 21, who admitted pouncing Duncan Kennedy several times, was sentenced to two years and eight months in prison. Tino Voelkel, 16, who was only pushed the U.S. athlete, was sentenced to one year.

U.N. to release Aideed supporters

GENEVA (AP) — Secretary-General Boutros Ghali on Monday ordered the release of eight Somali faction fighters detained for attacks on U.N. soldiers last June. He also ordered all restrictions to be lifted on the movement of Sharif Jess and Hersi Morgan, two top aides warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed. The move seemed designed to improve relations between the United Nations and General Aideed.

Pakistani, Saudi leaders urge Afghan truce

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan President Farouq Ahmad Leghari and Saudi Arabia's King Fahd called for an immediate ceasefire in Afghanistan, in a joint communiqué issued Monday simultaneously from Jeddah and Islamabad. The communiqué followed talks between King Fahd and Leghari, who is currently on a visit to Saudi Arabia. They urged the Afghan factional leaders to "fear Allah in what they are doing to their own people and homeland" and enforce an "unconditional ceasefire" throughout the country. The communiqué called for "faithful" implementation of power-sharing accords which were signed by the Afghan factions in March last year in Islamabad and later in the Afghan city of Jalalabad.

Brown confident U.S.-Jordan economic ties could be boosted

U.S. secretary ends visit saying Washington moving towards addressing Jordan's concerns

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown held talks here on Sunday with Jordanian leaders and said afterwards that he had made headway in his mission to explore avenues for closer Jordanian-American economic cooperation.

Mr. Brown, who arrived early morning and left for Israel late evening, said that during his talk he discussed means to enhance economic and commercial relationship with Jordan and that progress was made in Washington's quest to protect American intellectual property rights.

Mr. Brown also promised that "some action" would be taken soon to address Jordan's concerns over the negative impact on its economy of the de facto blockade at Aqaba Port.

He also said that Washington was currently reviewing possible debt relief for Jordan.

"That is an issue that has been raised with us and it is raised in every place we go."

he said. "It is a complicated issue, there are some discussions going on at the present time. I know from the Jordanian perspectives (that) there is anxiety that those discussions be concluded at the earliest possible time."

Mr. Brown, who held talks with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Planning Minister Ziad Farid, Finance Minister Sami Gammoh and Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf as well as Jordanian business leaders, was the first American secretary of commerce to visit the Kingdom.

"This has been an extraordinary productive day," he told a press conference after the conclusion of official talks and described his meeting with the Crown Prince as "a meeting of depth... a meeting of substance."

Dr. Khalaf told Jordan Television that Mr. Brown expressed Americans' sympathies and understanding for the economic consequences (of the blockade) on Jordan, "he said. "We are trying to find ways in

which we will continue, of course, to be in compliance with the U.N. resolutions and at the same time in such a way that it is devastating to the Jordanian economy."

"I think you should expect some action soon," he said at a later point when pressed on the same question. "... It is certainly a recommendation that I'll be making."

Mr. Brown said he was pressed his quest for an end to the Arab boycott of American companies dealing with Israel during his talks here.

"We would like to see the boycott and other impediments to free trade and commerce removed," he said. "My role as secretary of state, of course, is to focus on secondary and tertiary boycotts because they have a direct impact on American businesses and industry."

Jordan has said that it is too premature to discuss any lifting of the boycott before tangible progress is achieved in the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

"The two issues are not connected at all," he said flatly.

"As far as the Gulf of Aqaba is concerned, I expressed Americans' sympathies and understanding for the economic consequences (of the blockade) on Jordan," he said.

"We are trying to find ways in

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Majali: Jordan trying hard to achieve Arab reconciliation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan has been playing an active role towards bringing about reconciliation among Arab countries and is ready to embark on any step that would contribute to achieving that goal, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali was quoted as saying Monday.

"Jordan is doing all it can to achieve Arab reconciliation and is ready to do anything for the sake of the Arab Nation," Dr. Majali said in an interview published in the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) Al Ittihad newspaper.

"A reconciliation should cover all types of cooperation, including political, economic, cultural and social."

His Majesty King Hussein's visit to the United States, the prime minister said, aims to resolve their problems amicably and Jordan would spare no effort to help them to regain their rights.

"Any gains achieved by the Palestinians would reflect positively on us because we are brothers and together form one nation," Dr. Majali said.

On the future Palestinian-Jordanian relationship, he said that the people on the two sides of the River Jordan would have to decide on it and determine the nature of union between them when the time is right.

(Continued on page 5)

mitted to that coordination, and it hopes that the Arab parties will succeed in exchanging land for peace in implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

"A just durable peace in Jordan's view entails the return of the usurped land and water rights and the end of suffering of the people in the region," he said.

Commenting on the Oslo accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), he said that the deal was meant as a declaration of principles and Jordan has no alternative but to support the Palestinians in their drive to regain their rights.

"Jordan considers any success of any Arab unity as success for Jordan, which seeks a greater Arab unity," he said. "It is up to the Yemeni brothers to resolve their problems amicably and Jordan would spare no effort to help them to regain their rights."

Noting that it was the Yemeni leaders who had requested the King's mediation, Dr. Majali said that the unity in Yemen concerns the whole Arab World and not Jordan and Yemen alone.

In reply to a question, Dr. Majali said Jordan appreciated and supported UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan's initiative to restore

Arab solidarity.

The prime minister described Jordanian-UAR relations as brotherly ties and noted that Jordanians working in the UAE have always been treated on equal footing with the UAE people.

On Jordan's mediation to end the dispute among the leaders of Yemen, Dr. Majali said His Majesty King Hussein had delegated Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to act as mediator carrying royal messages to the Yemeni leaders.

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(Continued on page 5)

Iraq marks Gulf war with defiance

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Several thousand Iraqis marched through Baghdad on Monday shouting anti-American slogans and declaring loyalty to President Saddam Hussein on the third anniversary of the outbreak of the Gulf war.

"Whether (U.S. President Bill Clinton and Saudi Arabia's King) Fahd like or not, Saddam is staying in power for ever," they chanted, waving their fists and calling for revenge.

Iraq's youth federation brought in members from around the country, including Kurds wearing traditional baggy trousers who danced in circles around pipers and drummers and told reporters they came from the rebel provinces of Duhuk, Erbil and Sulaimaniyah.

Disabled veterans of the 1991 war drove their wheelchairs with one hand and waved Saddam portraits in the other.

Demonstrators with candles

paraded two coffins — one draped with the American flag, the other with Britain's — to the door of a U.N. building in Baghdad.

The protest in downtown Baghdad began five hours after President Saddam went on nationwide television to vow that the Iraqi people would not "stand idly by during the continuation of the (U.N.-imposed) blockade" and the "violation" of Iraqi airspace by U.S. and allied aircraft.

Denouncing Western nations and their Arab Gulf allies as "masters and slaves," President Saddam vowed to retaliate with "an eye for an eye and a tooth for tooth" in case of further "aggression." But he made no specific threats and did not say what form any "retaliation" might take.

Despite the anti-Western protests, Prime Minister Ahmad Hussein Khudayyar said Sunday that Iraq wanted to re-orient its ties with France, after breaking off diplomatic relations during the war, newspapers reported.

He was speaking to a French parliamentary delegation.

Members of the delegation, on a private visit, said they would work on their return to France for a lifting of the U.N. sanctions in force since Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. (see page 2).

The Baghdad demonstrators, mostly young men, hit the streets at 2:30 a.m. (2330 GMT), the time observed in Iraq as the start of the war on Jan. 17, 1991.

"All Iraq shouts: Saddam is my country's pride," was emblazoned on banners waved by the demonstrators. "With steadfastness and reconstruction, we can destroy the blockade," others said.

Iraq has intensified its calls for a lifting of the sanctions, which have halted many imports as well as exports of its vast oil reserves. In preparation moves for any easing of the sanctions, last year Iraq reopened its one sea link, the Shatt Al Arab which leads to the Gulf. Earlier this month, it inaugurated a petrochemical

plant on another economic lifeline, the overland tanker truck route to Turkey.

The press used the war anniversary to praise Iraq in splashy headlines of red, blue and green ink.

"The Iraqis prove now to the world that they are a part of the industrial era, not as consumers of Western industries, but through the way they reconstructed their national industries despite the blockade," Al Thawra newspaper, voice of the ruling Baath Party, said.

"A new Iraq and a new Iraqi personality are emerging under the leadership of Saddam Hussein," Al Thawra added.

Despite the 1991 military defeat, the war that President Saddam once termed "the mother of all battles" is billed in Iraq as "victory and triumph" over the United States and its allies.

Al Qadisiya, the Iraqi army newspaper, asserted Monday that the economic blockade of Iraq "has started to disintegrate as a result of Iraqi self-reliance."

SAOUD. He flew to Tunis at the weekend to brief Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat.

In Tunis, the PLO cautiously welcomed the outcome of the weekend summit between President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, and called for renewed Arab coordination on negotiations with Israel.

In comments distributed by the Middle East News Agency, Hassan Asfour, head of the Palestinian security committee, said the next round of talks begins Tuesday in the Red Sea resort of Taba.

Speaking in Taba, Mr. Asfour said the negotiations will tackle remaining sticking points concerning security at border crossings to future Palestinian autonomous areas of Gaza and Jericho. The talks also will focus on security zones around Jewish settlements to remain in the autonomous areas and on the size of Jericho, he said.

"Foremost among these subjects is the control over border crossing points," Mr. Asfour said. "Control of these points is at the heart of the internal Palestinian security function."

The last round of talks in Taba ended last Wednesday with agreement on 35 of the 38 areas of Palestinian civilian control. But it saw little progress on the security questions mentioned by Mr. Asfour.

"We (would then) believe that they (the results) will constitute a supporting factor in the hard negotiations going on the Palestinian track," Mr. Asfour told Reuters.

Mr. Asfour broke new ground in the peace process on Sunday when he announced that Syria could have "normal peaceful relations," with Israel under a peace agreement.

This week's round was to have begun Monday but was postponed due to the absence of chief negotiator Nabil

Syria's attitude to peace and said Israel should respond.

But Mr. Asfour said the PLO, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt should resume the coordination they established at the start of the U.S.-brokered peace conference in Madrid in 1991 in which negotiations were held on separate tracks.

"The new stage in the negotiations and particularly the difficulties we expect on all the tracks require the resumption of coordination between the five concerned Arab parties... in a way that there will not be negotiations (that are) easy and others difficult," Mr. Asfour said.

The "five" have not met since the PLO and Israel signed a declaration of principles in September for limited Palestinian interim self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza and started negotiating on its implementation.

Syria and Lebanon reproached the PLO at the time of the secretly negotiated deal, accusing it of not keeping them informed and going off at a tangent. The PLO responded that its negotiations for the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were to start only within three years.

Syria softened its stance last week when it joined Gulf

(Continued on page 5)

Jo d'ar times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جordan نايم يومية سلسلة بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة العربية الأردنية الرأي

Vatican heads towards dialogue with PLO

VATICAN CITY (R) — The Vatican said Monday it was stepping up its dialogue with Palestinians less than a month after its landmark recognition of Israel. An official statement said talks with a delegation Monday had been "the occasion for the start of a phase of more frequent contacts and a more official dialogue between the Holy See and Palestinian representatives." The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) delegation met Monsignor Claudio Celli, the Vatican's under-secretary for foreign affairs who signed last month's accord with Israel which cleared the way for full diplomatic ties between the Holy See and the Jewish state. Zuhdi Nashashibi, a PLO Executive Committee member who headed the delegation, had said before leaving Tunis that he would raise concerns about the accord's implications for Jerusalem. The Vatican supports a Palestinian homeland and wants Jerusalem, holy to Islam, Christianity and Judaism, to be protected by an internationally guaranteed statute. Monday's statement said the talks, which discussed the Middle East peace process and the status of Jerusalem, were cordial.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday confers with U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown in a meeting attended by

U.S. expects progress at next Israel-Syria talks

Damascus hails Geneva summit;

Israelis sceptical, but plan Golan poll

A SENIOR U.S. official,

briefing Israeli leaders on the Clinton-Assad summit, said Monday he expected Israel and Syria to move forward when they resume their talks next week.

U.S. State Department Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross said he believed Israel agreed with the U.S. assessment that the meeting of U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad Sunday broke new ground in the peace efforts.

But a spokesman for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Israel made no formal response at the briefing to Mr. Assad's pronouncement that he is ready for "normal peaceful relations among all."

The negotiations will resume in a more flexible forum with the heads of delegations. We should have and we would hope to see some movement and we think there's some potential," Mr. Ross told reporters after a 90-minute meeting with Mr. Rabin.

Palestinians fear Syria-Israel peace

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Many Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories say they fear being left in the cold if Sunday's Clinton-Assad summit leads to a thaw in peace moves between Israel and Syria.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials, wary of offending Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, have publicly brimmed with optimism about his Geneva summit with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Progress on any Middle East peace track is progress on all tracks, the officials said.

But many Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip worry that Mr. Assad, who was outraged when the PLO negotiated a peace deal with Israel behind his back, may feel he no longer has to resist U.S. and Israeli pressure to make peace with the Jewish state.

"Many people are afraid Syria will make peace with Israel and then Israel will have absolutely no reason to make concessions to the Palestinians. We will be even more squeezed," said Jamal Mashal, a lawyer from Jenin.

"Since 1948, Israel has tried 'divide and rule' with the Arabs. Now they are close to achieving it," he said.

For decades, Syria under Mr. Assad was Israel's archfoe, sticking doggedly to Arab nationalist ideology.

But there have also long been signs Mr. Assad is ready for peace at the right price. And the price may have dropped since, as he sees it, his old adversary PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat broke Arab ranks and signed a separate peace with Israel last year.

In Gaza last week, many Palestinians attributed delays

in Israeli-PLO talks on an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho to the summit. They accused Israel of stalling to see if movement from Syria would strengthen its position with the Palestinians.

Publicly, Palestinian politicians of all hues were upbeat about the meeting, careful to keep on the right side of Mr. Assad who is now the key power broker in Middle East politics.

"We are not worried at all,

to the contrary, we have always said real peace has to be comprehensive peace and that includes Syria. Any progress for Syria is progress for us," Saeb Erekat, a PLO negotiator, told Reuters.

Mahmoud Al Zohar, a spokesman for the Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas, was just as optimistic, telling Al Quds newspaper Syria would not yield to U.S. pressure to close down Syria-based Palestinian groups opposed to the Israel-PLO deal.

But newspaper editorials seemed as much aimed at persuading themselves as anybody else that they why Assad would not be lured into deserting the Palestinian cause by Mr. Clinton and the prospect of fully entering the international community.

"Syria has not abandoned, at least in public, its (Arab) nationalist positions which means the Syrian regime under Hafez Al Assad cannot change its position from refusing to enter a separate peace into entering it," said Al Nahar newspaper.

But it added: "It is clear that even if Israel's rulers are not taking part today in Geneva, they are a basic part of these negotiations."

Hariri scores political success through Solidiere

By Andrew Tarnowski

Reuter

BEIRUT — Lebanon's Solidere flotation shows Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri can get things done against determined opposition, Beirut bankers and economists say.

Moray and confidence were returning to the country wrecked by 15 years of civil war.

"Hariri has shown that he can get things done. That's very important," said Sabah Al Haj, chairman of the Arab Finance Corporation and a former fund manager for Mr. Hariri.

The scepticism around Solidere in the market was enormous. Very intelligent and sophisticated people forecast the doom of solidere initially. But Hariri has shown it is viable," he said.

The issue raised \$926 million, well over its \$650 million target for the reconstruction of Beirut's central district shattered by the 1975-90 war. It may have been the biggest corporate flotation in the Middle East.

Nearly \$600 million came from deposits held by Lebanese overseas, accelerating a year-old trend towards capital repatriation and squeezing out most of the \$320 million subscribed by non-Lebanese Arabs.

"It's a terrific thing," said a Beirut banker. "The Lebanese are intent on bringing back expatriate capital."

If this issue had taken place two or three years ago I don't think we would have got the same result because there is

more confidence now," he said.

Solidere will start work by June, company chief Nasser Chamaa said. All tender documentation for construction contracts is ready for immediate issue after the company is incorporated.

However, company officials and other sources said trading in the shares on a new Beirut secondary market, originally expected to start this month, may not begin until March because incorporation procedures may take that long.

Officials at Societe Financiere du Liban SAL, which will operate the market under central bank authority, say it will be ready by mid-February. SEL is setting up the computerised market floor on Riad Al Sol, Beirut's former banking street.

The exchange, designed by Andersen consulting who prepared the Riyad stock exchange and others, is now being tested.

In the meantime, dealers report grey market demand but no supply since share allocations are not finalised. On Friday, five days after the issue closed, they quoted prices of 110-112 to 110-115 for the 100 shares but no deals.

Nabil Aoun, chairman of Fidus SAL investment house, said Mr. Hariri scored a big success in overcoming political opposition to the project.

Opposition came chiefly from Beirut property owners angered by the expropriation of their rights and from Muslim clerics who denounced the share issue as a sinful usurpation.

"It is necessary to prevent the type of incidents which create doubts regarding the political stability and security of the Islamic Republic," he said on Wednesday.

Attacks target Western missions in Tehran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Western embassies in the Iranian capital have been targeted in a wave of attacks in the past two weeks, blamed by the government on "anti-clergy elements" with links to the dissident group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq.

Simultaneous petrol bomb attacks were carried out against the French, British and Russian embassies at dawn on Jan. 5, and some structural damage was caused when shots were fired at the British embassy last Sunday.

On Thursday morning, two bombs exploded near Ferdowsi Square, not far from the embassies, injuring three passers-by and damaging shops. One of those injured died in hospital on Saturday.

Police have arrested 17 suspects in connection with the bombings and Sunday's attack, four of whom were released after preliminary interrogation, the official news agency IRNA said.

Arms and ammunition were seized from the suspects.

Several of them confessed to links with the Iraq-based Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, and said they had received instructions to "carry out" sabotage activities throughout Tehran," it said.

The rebel group has denied involvement in any of the incidents.

Police on Saturday accused "fanatic and perverted elements" with links to the Mujahedeen of carrying out the bombings and Sunday's attack on the British embassy.

The "terrorists" had beliefs contrary to Islamic principles and the clerical spirit of the 1979 revolution, the statement said.

The Mujahedeen were also said to be behind grenade attacks against the French embassy and Air France office in Tehran just over two months ago as well as the hijacking of an oil ministry plane to Iraq in late November.

It was the first time the authorities had used the terms "fanatics" and "anti-clergy" to describe the attackers.

The officials imposed a new black-out on the embassy attacks up until Thursday.

The bombings prompted the authorities to end their silence and speak out against "conspiracies aimed at undermining" Iran's relations with Western countries.

On Saturday, the Tehran Times, quoting an Interior Ministry source, said the names of those responsible and details of their activities would soon be published.

Diplomats in Tehran said on Sunday that the government's silence could be due to the "awkward position" it had been placed in because of the attacks.

"Such incidents are not helpful when the authorities are trying to convince the world that Iran is a safe place for investment," they said.

The Tehran Times, which often reflects the views of President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, earlier called for tighter security around foreign embassies to "forestall any attempts at sabotaging Iran's diplomatic achievements."

"It is necessary to prevent the type of incidents which create doubts regarding the political stability and security of the Islamic Republic," he said on Wednesday.

Mr. Clinton specifically wanted Assad to pressure Libya leader Muammar Qaddafi to turn over for trial two Libyans suspected in the December 1988 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland of the Pan Am jetliner that killed 270 passengers and people on the ground.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Khaled Faizan 888865
Al-Saleh Al-Dakheel 827195
Dr. Bassam Kardeeb 736072
Dr. Yahya Abdal Salam 641912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asmaa pharmacy 637055
Nairokhi pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636790
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsiyya pharmacy 637669
Nairokhi pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

BEDR: Dr. Mohammad Al Omari 272002
Alquds pharmacy (—)

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures will rise slightly with the appearance of clouds at low altitudes, and winds will be southwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Anman 5 / 16

Aqaba 8 / 21

Deserts 4 / 17

Jordan Valley 10 / 22

ZARQA: Dr. Tareq Al Hijawi 985465



A group of young Iraqis as part of a 10,000-strong demonstration held placards of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as they took to the streets in Baghdad early Monday to mark the third anniversary of the start of the Gulf war. (AFP photo)

Moments of tension in Geneva

GENEVA (R) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad treated U.S. President Bill Clinton Sunday to five-hour taste of his chess-player style of diplomacy.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Egypt pays 'repentant' militant \$6,000

CAIRO (AFP) — The Egyptian Interior Ministry has paid a militant 20,000 pounds (\$6,000) for leaving a radical group involved in anti-government activities, police said Sunday. Adel Mohammad Abdul Bakr, a key member of Al Shawiqiyeh which is based primarily in Fayoum southeast of Cairo, had decided to leave the organisation and declared he had repented by condemning its activities, they said. But police provided no details on the conditions surrounding his surrender or any possible charges that may be brought against him. Last month the ministry gave out rewards of 100,000 Egyptian pounds (\$30,000) to three people who provided police with information on a fundamentalist involved in a carbomb attack that almost killed Egyptian Prime Minister Atel Sedki on Nov. 25. The ministry recently announced it would pay 100,000 pounds to any person providing information leading to the arrest of a wanted fundamentalist.

Sudanese university vice-chancellors

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese President General Omar Hassan Al Bashir has sacked the vice-chancellors of the University of Khartoum and of the Sudan University for Science and Technology (UST), the official SUNA news agency reported. The report said Professor Mamoun Mohammad Ali Humaida had been dismissed from the University of Khartoum and Prof. Ahmad Al Amin Abdul Rahman from the UST. No reasons for the dismissals were given.

Abuses linked to 676 deaths in Turkey

ANKARA (AFP) — Human rights abuses have reached an alarming level in Turkey, where at least 676 people were killed and 28 disappeared last year, the Turkish human rights association said Sunday. The association said 524 people were killed by unidentified attackers mostly in the east and southeast of the country. Among them was Kurdish Deputy Mehmet Sincar, who was gunned down in his hometown of Batman by suspected separatist guerrillas. Another 135 people were killed in what the association called "arbitrary executions" by the security forces. At least 17 people died under torture, the association said, calling for stronger measures to ensure that human rights abuses are not carried out in prison. The association also said 28 people disappeared after being remanded in custody by police, while security forces often claimed they vanished after they had been freed. According to the group, 51 journalists are being held, four political parties have been closed down and two are being subjected to legal challenges and 260 books and 23 newspapers were banned.

Egypt backs Indonesia U.N. bid

JAKARTA (AFP) — Egypt backs Indonesia's bid for a non-permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council and will consider supporting its bid to chair the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) for another term, the official Antara news agency said Monday. Visiting Egyptian International Cooperation Minister Yousef Boutros Ghali, attending a three-day meeting of the Indonesia-Egypt joint commission, said Cairo thought highly of Indonesia's economic reforms and saw them as a viable model for other NAM members. Indonesia has chaired the 108-member NAM since September 1992. Its term is due to expire in 1995. Dr. Ghali, who is heading a delegation of 16 businessmen, said Egypt backed Jakarta's bid for non-permanent membership at the U.N. Security Council, as developing countries needed an advocate among international decision makers.

Iraqis ask Israel for political asylum

TEL AVIV (AP) — Two Iraqis crossed into Israel from Jordan over the weekend and asked the Jewish state for political asylum, Israeli media reported Monday. The daily Haaretz said the two men, aged 30 and 35, snuck into Israel from Jordan near the Dead Sea and then surrendered themselves to soldiers in the area. The soldiers questioned the two men, then handed them over to police, who will ask the Beersheba magistrates court to extend their detention to allow further international. Haaretz said.

French MPs to work for lifting of Iraq embargo

BAGHDAD (AFP) — French lawmakers on Sunday ended talks in Baghdad, promising to work on their return for lifting U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq more than three years ago, the delegation said.

It also held talks with Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahaf.

Kurds call for pressure

The Kurds of northern Iraq called Sunday on the United Nations to pressure Baghdad to resupply the Dohuk region with electricity after a six-month cut.

But Iraq said the U.N. embargo prevented it from buying spare parts to carry out repair work.

The Kurds, in a letter to U.N. representatives in Dohuk, called on the world body "to put serious pressure on the Iraqi regime to supply the governorate with electricity as soon as possible.

"If not we won't be able to prevent riots in a rather big dimension," they warned.

The spokesman for the local committee which sent the letter, Ramadan Issa, told AFP in the town of Zakho that more than 50 children had died last summer in one month alone because of the power cut.

But in Baghdad, the head of the electricity authority, said it was not to blame.

"The hydroelectric station at the Saddam Dam which supplies Dohuk with electricity was destroyed" during the 1991 Gulf war, said Jaafar Zia Janjar, an adviser to President Saddam Hussein.

"But our order for spare parts was not accepted by the U.N. sanctions commission," he said, charging that Kurdish sabotage was also to blame

Home News



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Monday plant a tree at Al Hussein National Park (Petra photo)

Regent, Princess Sarvath plant trees

Inaugurate Al Hussein National Park

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath and a large gathering of citizens and members of diplomatic missions in Amman, Monday, attended the inauguration of Al Hussein National Park, northeast of Amman by planting trees on the site.

Raising the Amman Municipality and the Ministry of Agriculture for jointly implementing the project, located near Abu Alanda, the monarch urged every family and citizen in Jordan to plant trees in as many areas as possible.

In a brief speech at the start of the ceremony Prince Hassan conveyed to the audience greetings from His Majesty King Hussein saying that a planting would help fulfill Monarch's call to green Jordan by the year 2000.

Underlining the importance of trees to the soil and as a source of food, Prince Hassan said that the Arab World currently imports \$100 billion worth of food simply because the shortage of production disregards for the interaction between water, energy and environment-related issues.

Referring to Al Hussein National Park, set up on 1,248 dunums, Prince Hassan said the project will fulfill a long cherished desire to establish a green belt around the capital, a bid to stem desertification.

This project compensates Amman for the loss of its agricultural land on the western side of the city and is designed as a drive to protect agricultural land, the environment and water resources in the eastern side, noted Prince Hassan.

Praying Amman Municipality for creating a park benefiting its capital's residents, the Prince expressed hope that private institutions would join hands with the municipality in its drive to green the city and its surroundings.

Amman Mayor Mamduh Abbadi accompanied the Crown Prince on a tour of the site which, he said, is being planted with 30 types of trees as watered from a local area well via a drip-irrigation system.

U.N. to rehabilitate wells in West Bank

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The United Nations has adopted two projects to rehabilitate deep wells, springs and related wells in the occupied Palestinian territories and settled grants, loans and local funding to cover the financing of these projects.

According to two reports released by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), rehabilitation of springs over a period of five years will cost \$44,200.

This payment for the project will be equally divided between outright grants from international donors and funding from local farmers.

The project for the rehabilitation of wells proposes the establishment of a drilling company in the occupied Palestinian lands, most probably in Jerusalem, at a total cost of \$2,700,000.

The project proposal has been prepared with a view to drilling 40 deep wells in the next five years to dig new or replacement wells at a total cost over the five-year period of \$6.5 million.

According to the project proposal, made available to Jordan Times, the cost of rehabilitation of wells will be covered by the well owners (\$2.75 million) and external sources (\$3.75 million).

Because of the poor economic status of well owners, some portions of the cost of operations will be on the basis of grants and some portions in loans.

The two projects were triggered by the fact that the population of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip depend completely on rain water for survival.

The annual rainfall ranges from a minimum of 150-300 mm in the east and south to 600mm in the north. According to ESCWA reports, the Palestinians use 100-110 million cubic metres in the West Bank, and out of this 33 million cubic metres is pumped from wells for agricultural purposes.

There are some 370 wells in the West Bank and some 1,900 in the Gaza Strip used both by Palestinians and the Israeli settlers.

The wells in the Gaza Strip are from 20-50 metres, while those in the West Bank range from 50-150 metres deep, but may go as deep as 250 metres for agricultural purposes and up to 800 metres for domestic use.

Close to 40 per cent of the wells in the West Bank are in the areas of the Jordan Valley.

But the report indicates that the conditions of the wells are "very unsatisfactory."

The two projects aim to increase agricultural productivity and the profitability of the farm family by increasing the efficiency of irrigation, lowering the cost of pumping water from deep wells and by expanding the land area under irrigation.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Ist political party is legalised

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Interior has approved the establishment of the Pan-Arab Front Party, making it Jordan's first legalised political party.

Labour unions group meeting ends

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates of Federations Labour Unions in seven Arab states ended a two-day workshop in Amman on workers' rights, issuing an appeal to world organisations concerned with labour conditions to exert pressure on the Israeli authorities in order to ensure respect for international conventions on the rights of workers in the occupied Arab lands. Delegates also called on Arab governments to attend vocational training of workers in bid to help them unemployment and develop existing legislation concerning workers' rights and wages. Attended by delegates from Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain, Yemen, Tunisia, Palestine and Kuwait, the meeting reviewed several working papers dealing with legislation on workers' rights and listened to lectures by a representative of the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

HUDD head leaves for Washington meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) Yousef Hiyasat Monday left Amman for Washington to participate in the meeting of the Higher Steering Committee of the International Urban Development Programme due to open Tuesday.

Health ministry steps up food store inspections

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas Monday said the ministry will intensify its inspection of food stores and will require their owners to keep food supplies refrigerated at appropriate temperatures. In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Malhas said that because many diseases spread during the fasting month of Ramadan, which will start around Feb. 11, the ministry will step up these inspections. He said instructions were issued by the ministry to store owners which produce Qatayef (a sweet popular during Ramadan) to obtain special permits from the ministry. Stores violating the ministry's instructions will be closed and their owners will be referred to courts, the minister warned.

Canadian official praises Jordan's role in peace process

AMMAN (J.T.) — Canadian Assistant Deputy Foreign Minister for Africa and the Middle East Marc Perron, who today (Tuesday) winds up a two-day visit to Jordan and leaves for the West Bank, praised the Kingdom's role in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

As part of a Middle East tour to discuss the status of Palestinian refugees in the diaspora, Mr. Perron, who is involved in the working group on refugees in the multilateral phase of the Mideast peace negotiations, discussed the needs of refugees in Jordan at a meeting Monday with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassani.

The Canadian official, who has been to Lebanon and Syria before coming to Jordan (three countries hosting Palestinian refugees), has also met with senior officials at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to discuss additional needs of the refugees, according to a Canadian embassy official here Monday.

To drain away rain water, he said, the municipality has built several culverts and taken other measures to prevent soil erosion in the park.

Among those attending the tree-planting celebration, which marked Jordan's observance of Arbor Day this year, were Cabinet members, Parliament deputies, ambassadors and other officials who took part in planting trees supplied by the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Mr. Perron as expressing appreciation for Jordan's role in the peace process and its positive contributions to the establishment of stability and security in the region, particularly its active participation in the working group on the refugees which last met in Tunis late last year.

Mr. Hassan voiced Jordan's gratitude for Canada's contribution to the peace process and its efforts to deal with the refugee question.

He said Jordan is actively concerned with the question of the refugees and the displaced persons, noting that the Kingdom has been shouldering heavy responsibilities towards those residing in Jordan.

Mr. Hassan said Jordan was seeking to provide improved services to the refugees while protecting their political rights, including their right to return to their homeland or their compensation in accordance with U.N. resolutions.

'94 budget provides for housing — JVA

GHOR SAIFI (Petra) — The 1994 fiscal budget provides JD 40 million for the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA), registering a 56 per cent increase over allocations made in 1993, and a major portion of the budget is to be used to finance housing and dam-building projects, according to Abdul Aziz Wishah, JVA secretary general.

Speaking during a tour of the southern Jordan Valley region, Dr. Wishah said the government hopes to offer each family in the region a housing unit or a plot of land on which to build a home on state-owned land in the Jordan Valley.

For its part the JVA is prepared to facilitate these plans by distributing the lands to local farmers, said Dr. Wishah.

Furthermore, the government plans to appoint workers for the JVA from local residents and is cooperating in this regard with the Civil Service Commission (CSC), explained Dr. Wishah who was speaking at a meeting with local department heads in Karak government.

Noting that the government, through the JVA, was sparing no effort in search of additional water resources, Dr. Wishah said that plans have been endorsed for the construction of dams in the southern Jordan Valley.

At the meeting, organised by the local chapter of the Arab Youth Forum, discussion covered education, health and agricultural services to local residents.

Islamic-Christian dialogue to focus on religions' stand vis-a-vis nationalities

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, today (Tuesday) will open an Islamic-Christian dialogue on religions' stand vis-a-vis nationalities, which is to be attended by delegates from 16 Islamic and Christian nations.

The dialogue, the fourth to be organised by the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research (AL Al Bayt Foundation) is aimed at helping to promote cooperation and enhance links among various faiths, according to AL Al Bayt Vice President Abdul Aziz Al Khayat.

Held in cooperation with the Vatican Council on Promoting Relations with other Faiths, the three-day meeting will discuss several research papers focusing on Muslims' and Christians' stand vis-a-vis nationalities religion in the contemporary age, challenges and issues facing relations between religions and nationalities and other related topics.

The meetings, initiated in 1984 by Crown Prince Hassan, aim at bringing the followers of the two religions closer together and enabling them to work for a common cause, said Dr. Khayat.

Among the main speakers in the opening session will be



President of AL Al Bayt University Mohammad Adnan Al Bakhty Monday meets with visiting Cardinal Francis Arinze of the Vatican

Justice Minister Taher Hikmat who will present a paper on the relationship between religion and nationalities, as well as challenges currently facing the two religions, according to Dr. Khayat.

These papers, he added, will prove that there can be no contradiction between religions and nationalities, and in fact, religion can help prevent any inclination towards bigotry, racism and extremism or ethnic hatreds.

The series of meetings between representatives of the Christian and Islamic faiths have contributed to bolstering relations between scholars of both faiths and encouraged them to pursue their efforts,

said Dr. Khayat.

The AL Al Bayt Foundation

said the meetings are to be held at the King Abdullah Mosque in Amman.

Taking part in the dialogue are scholars from Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, Bosnia, Turkey, Senegal, Sudan, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, the United Kingdom, the U.S., Malaysia, Spain, Nigeria and France.

A total of 65 scholars will be participating in the discussions.

U.S. commerce chief visits firm aided by USAID financing

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As a reaffirmation of one of the key themes of his visit to the Middle East, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown Monday took time out from official talks to visit a private sector company which has benefited the U.S. government financing programmes.

During his 45-minute visit to Al Hikma Pharmaceuticals in the industrial zone near Wadi Seir in the western outskirts of Amman, Mr. Brown underlined the importance that Washington was attaching to the role of the private sector in regional economic development as part of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

"Governments can only be vehicles" for economic interaction and the private sector must take the lead in identifying areas of cooperation in trade as well as industrial ventures, Mr. Brown said in brief remarks during a meeting with executives of the privately-owned company.

He praised Al Hikma's initiatives to open new markets and develop itself into a major contributor to Jordan's exports.

Sales to 20 countries in the Middle East, Africa and Europe accounted for 86 per cent of the company's \$36 million turnover in 1992.

Underlining the company's achievements, Mr. Brown said he appreciated those "who are competing and winning" through innovative methods.

The company, established in 1978, has benefited from a commodity import programme (financing), management and technical assistance programme which has allowed Jordanian firms to produce internationally acceptable products at competitive prices which (have) significantly increased the private sector's overall economic growth.

Samir Darwazeh, general director of the company, said that Al Hikma had \$50 million turnover in 1993 and that it had acquired a wholly-owned subsidiary in New Jersey in addition to launching ventures in Portugal, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia.

Officials accompanying Mr. Brown explained to the company officials other avenues of short-term financing arrangements available through U.S. government agencies and promised to follow up closely on the company's requirements, estimated at more than \$8 million in imports from the U.S. by the year 1995.

The imports will also in-

clude equipment for the company's projects in Portugal and new ventures in Tunisia, Al Hikma officials said.

Al Hikma employs about 500 people. About 25 per cent of its products are manufactured under licence from international firms such as Eli Lilly, S.K.F. & Kline. The company also cooperates with three major Japanese pharmaceutical firms, which have granted it licences.

Mr. Darwazeh told Mr. Brown that U.S. firms were traditionally reluctant to grant licences.

"We have been trying to get licences ever since we graduated from U.S. universities," he said, underlining the problems encountered in this context.

Heard during a briefing offered to Mr. Brown by the company officials were observations of hurdles that impede closer cooperation between Jordanian-American businesses.

These included repeated requests for renewals of letters of credit because of shortcomings in documentation, lack of flexibility, strict terms of payment and a missing sense of urgency on de-

livery schedules on the part of U.S. companies.

Furthermore, many U.S. firms are also unaware of government-supported financing arrangements for imports/exports.

A general complaint was also that of a lack of interest by U.S. firms in dealing with Jordanian companies since the volume of business involved is relatively low compared to the overall turnover of international giants as well as insistence on going through subsidiaries instead of direct dealings.

Mr. Brown said he was not "offended" by the observations and conceded that some of the complaints that were raised were not limited to U.S. firms dealing with Jordan.

He said the Department of Commerce was trying to address some of the shortcomings, but again, there is not much the government could do to address special features of private companies.

In general terms, he said the department is committed to raising the awareness of business potential of Jordan among U.S. businessmen.

WHAT'S GOING ON EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition on the art of architecture at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Photo exhibition by artist Muwaffaq Al Sheikh at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Sadik Kwaish entitled "Talisma" at Baladna Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of Iraqi books at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Permanent exhibition of contemporary Arab artists and "Chair" exhibition at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh.

DIALOGUE

- ★ Dialogue with Egyptian actor Abdul Rahman Abu Zahra at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.

POETRY RECITAL

- ★ Poetry recital by poet Farid al Barghouthi at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 7:00 p.m.

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture in Arabic on the current winter by Dr. Ali Abada, secretary general of the Meteorological Department, at Arab Youth Forum (Wasfi Al Tal Street) at 5:00 p.m.

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The 'peace of the brave'

IN THE words of U.S. President Bill Clinton, Syria's willingness to reach a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East was expressed in clear forthright terms. After five hours of talks with Mr. Clinton in Geneva, Syrian President Hafez Al Assad reiterated what the nation's Arab stance has been since, and well before, the

Arab-Israeli peace process started in Madrid in 1991: "The Arabs want the peace of the brave, a peace that can be survived."

What that means, in essence, is that the Arabs want a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of international legitimacy and the exchange of stand for peace.

"I would hope that (Assad's statements) would provoke a positive response in Israel and that then the parties would get together and work these details out,"

Mr. Clinton told reporters after his meeting with Assad on Sunday.

But a positive response Assad's remarks did not provoke in Israel. Instead, Israeli officials downplayed the importance of the achievements of the Geneva summit, colouring their reaction to it with the insecurity, flawed interpretations and the negativity that render Israel lacking in the courage necessary for it to embark on the "peace of the brave."

Israeli officials further said that Mr. Assad was not as clear and unequivocal about Syria's perception of peace as Israel had hoped he would be. But Mr. Assad can never say what Israel wants him to say. Nor can any other Arab leader. What Israel wants Arab leaders to say is that they are committed to diplomatic relations, open borders, tourism and trade with it. What it did not want

is to say is that in return, Israel has to fulfill its international obligations and withdraw from the Arab lands it occupies by force.

By any serious standard, that amounts to surrender, and that no Arab country is willing to do.

What Syria's stated position has been is that it wants "full peace for full withdrawal (from the Golan Heights and other occupied Arab territories)."

Such a position is vague only in the minds of Israeli dolesters. Full peace means open borders and diplomatic relations and tourism and trade. But it also means withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and the Golan Heights and south Lebanon and the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return to their homeland.

Israel cannot have one without the other. Nor can it expect the world to continue to fall for the pretenses behind which it is hiding its fears from achieving real peace in the Middle East. The genuine peace initiatives that the Arabs have made are too many, and Lebanon clear, for Israel to distort with its propaganda apparatus or undermine with its false security concerns.

Syria's statement of its willingness for peace were unequivocal, Israel's reaction to this statement was not non-committal.

"It's Beirut are in exile if it two or think same."

AL DUSTOUR daily commented on the outcome of the Syrian-American summit meeting and the results serve as a new test for the American administration which claims to be a full partner in the peace process. The results also serve as testing ground for the Israeli government which continues to brag about peace but has, to date, rejected to comply with its requirements and the implementation of U.N. resolutions, said the daily. The Syrian president's statements about his country's readiness for peace reflects the stand of the whole Arab Nation provided Israel is willing to implement the U.N. resolutions, said the daily. The United States, which claims to be a partner in the peace-making process, is now expected to exercise its role and bring about the aspiration peace, demanded the paper. Washington must have realized now that Syria's demands are similar to those of other Arab parties involved in the peace process and that these are all legitimate and aiming at establishing permanent peace and security in the region.

JO added the daily. It said that the Arabs are now awaiting the Israeli response and the American action in light of the results of the Geneva summit and awaiting to see some progress in the Middle East peace process.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour daily Monday tackled the lengthy speeches by Parliament members who, he said, discussed detailed issues pertaining to their respective districts during the debate on the 1994 fiscal budget. Ahmad Shaker said that among the media, Jordan Television was perhaps more successful than the press in selecting only what is useful and sums up the main points of each deputy and presented it to the viewers. While admitting that the views of the deputies should be heard in the framework of democracy, one can only say that presentation of views ought to be better organized so that they would not take four whole days and evenings, said the writer. He suggested that the deputies of each district meet in advance of every Parliament session and unify their stand and agree on a specified address to be delivered during the session. The writer said that the other alternative is for each deputy to summarize his speech on one or two pages rather than go into details which sometimes do not serve their purpose. The writer said that deputies affiliated to political parties could also present the views of their respective parties during the session through one speech which can summarize the party's demands.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

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Features

JORDAN TIMES, TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1994 5

Russia — a dangerous place to do business

By Jayson Carcione

Reuter

LONDON — It could be gangland Chicago or New York during the 1920s and 1930s, when mobsters, thugs and hoodlums controlled a vast criminal empire linked to protection rackets, gambling, prostitution and extortion.

But a new survey says this is Russia today.

Since the fall of communism, organised crime in Russia has grown at an alarming rate.

A report published by an international security firm, Control Risks Group, revealed that about 3,000 organised crime groups engaged in racketeering, extortion and kidnapping have surfaced in the former Soviet Union.

"The crime situation has deteriorated in the past two years. Unfortunately foreigners, including businesses, are targets of crime," said a Russian embassy spokesman in London.

"It is not absolutely safe to travel to Moscow and St. Petersburg," he added.

The control risks report also reflects the fears of British business in Russia, which believes it to be the most dangerous place in the world to operate.

Of 100 top British executives polled, more than half saw Russia "as difficult country to set up and run a business in."

The survey said: "Political uncertainty will continue in Russia throughout 1994, but escalating crime is the most pressing security problem for foreign business."

In the first six months of 1993 there were 7,000 reported crimes against foreigners, most of which were extortion demands.

Perhaps not a high figure in some western cities, but in a country where communist law and order suppressed most criminal activity, it is uncommon.

The real figures are likely to be much higher, though it is not clear how many of these extortions involved foreign business," said the report.

It added that serious crimes against foreigners are still rare in the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, but warned that foreign business "faces an increasing risk of extortion demands" in those former Soviet republics.

The British Foreign Office shares the concerns of overseas business in Russia. Its travel section has cautioned Britons to be on guard against crime and keep all expensive items out of sight.

"Legitimate business is being scared by the gangster-style of trading in Russia," said Christopher Grose, director of Control Risks Information Services, after the report was published.

"The lack of normal business practice is encouraging

Majali

(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Majali urged Arab states to join Western creditors in rescheduling its debts to revive the economy, rocked by foreign debt and a sharp decline in aid.

Dr. Majali said the domestic economy had started to improve since Jordan launched reforms.

"We have overcome the most difficult stages and Jordan hopes sisterly countries (Arabs) will show understanding as was done by friendly countries, which have rescheduled our debts," he said.

Dr. Majali did not name the Arab creditors nor give figures.

According to official Arab figures, Jordan received around \$2.1 billion of \$19.5 billion extended by Gulf states in loans and grants in the five years before the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

It has also received more than 10 per cent of the total. Arab aid of nearly \$100 billion provided between 1970 and 1992.

PLO

(Continued from page 1) states and Egypt in a declaration which described the Israel-PLO accord as a first step on the path of peace.

There had been no consultations between the PLO and Damascus before the Geneva summit, and so far, no briefing has been planned after it PLO officials said.

Political activists see democratic process reversing

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Political activists charge that there is regress in democracy in Jordan for which the government is not the only party to blame.

"Democracy and (people's) rights are not going to be granted (to the people) by the regime, they should be taken (by force)," said Riad Nayawayat, a former deputy, at a roundtable entitled "The Future of Democracy in Jordan," held at the Professional Union's Complex Sunday.

"The 1952 constitution is better (than the present one)... everything in the past was better," said Leith Shebelat, also a former deputy.

To Salim Zou'bi, who unlike his colleagues ran for relection but lost, the trend (going back on the path of democracy) is because "the enemies of democracy and the leaders of the martial law era are still in power and are scheming against democracy."

According to Mr. Zou'bi, a prominent lawyer who served in the 11th Parliament Judicial Committee the "signs" of reversal.

Adding to the list of "reversal phenomenon," Mr.

grees and reversal of democracy are manifested in the procedures that started with the dissolution of Parliament, in August last year, and were followed by the introduction of the one-person, one-vote Election Law.

"This weird and odd law... I don't think that there were dire necessities to change the law in this manner without resorting to the legislative authority," Mr. Zou'bi said. "And besides, article 94 of the constitution before it was amended in 1958, stipulated that the Cabinet, with the approval of the King, can introduce temporary laws only in case of emergency. The emergency cases were confined to: natural catastrophes, war and the need to dispense emergency funds."

According to the former deputy, the other signs of this reversal are reflected in what he described as government interference in the recent elections and the bias of the local media in favour of the government against the opposition.

Calling it an experiment is a denial of the Constitution," he said.

To Ata Abu Rishbeh, another speaker at Sunday's

roundtable, and spokesperson for the Hizb Al Tahrir party, the idea of democracy is altogether inconsistent with the Islamic Sharia. Based on the principle that "sovereignty is the right of the people," democracy is in contradiction with Islam which stipulates that sovereignty is for God solely; that is, laws and legislations should be extracted from the Koran and the Prophet's tradition and not "from the people themselves." Mr. Abu Rishbeh said.

Referring to policies and practices of the ministries of finance, defence, and the interior, Mr. Shebelat contended that "civil society institutions are still incapable of doing anything to (stay) the continuous violations of human rights."

"Democracy has tightened the fetters on the ideological, political and social freedoms," he said.

Mr. Shebelat criticised what he saw as undemocratic approaches, refuting the "so-called democratic experiment."

"Calling it an experiment is a denial of the Constitution," he said.

To Ata Abu Rishbeh, another speaker at Sunday's

introduction of democracy in 1989 and in some cases are becoming more severe as in the case of labour unions "which were more active in the pre-democracy era."

Senator Laifa Sharaf, a former minister of information, supported Mr. Khawajah's argument but attributed this regression to the people's lack of enthusiasm and interest in enhancing the democratic process in the country.

"In the pre-democracy era, unions and organisations were more active and registered remarkable achievements," Ms. Sharaf said. "Before, bimonthly would attend any meeting that the Arab Organisation for Human Rights in Jordan called for... at present, quorum can be hardly achieved."

Ms. Sharaf, together with Mr. Zou'bi, put the blame partly on the Parliament itself, for lack of coordination and direct contact with the peoples' main concerns and partly on the people themselves, who, unaccustomed to democratic practices, seem incapable of living up to democratic principles.

Brown optimistic over economic ties

(Continued from page 1)

Crown Prince Hassan told Jordan Television after his talks with Mr. Brown that "clearly this is an issue that has to be raised in the context of peacemaking" and noted that the idea of free trade in the Middle East was reviewed at length at a meeting in London

Asked whether there was any move to make capital

last week.

The U.S. secretary of commerce said he "indicated strongly and unequivocally that (Washington) will be very supportive of Jordan" in the Kingdom's bid to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Asked whether there was

any move to make capital

U.S. expects Israel-Syria move

(Continued from page 1)

based on U.N. resolutions and the principle of a land-for-peace deal as specified at the start of Arab-Israeli peace talks in Madrid in 1991.

"The historic summit has given a new impetus and injected a new spirit, into the stalled peace talks on the basis of the Madrid equation," the newspaper said.

Al Thawra noted that the summit proved that Syria is viewed by Washington as a key and decisive player in achieving peace in the region.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, speaking from Geneva, said: "This summit will revive the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese

tracks, it will yield a comprehensive settlement based on land in return for peace and will lead to the formation of a Syrian-American mechanism to tackle all the issues between the two parties."

Some Arab diplomats also said that while peace between Syria and Israel might lead to both countries' troops leaving Lebanon, that country would probably remain under Damascus' political tutelage.

A flurry of statements praising the summit came from pro-Syrian Lebanese officials.

Prime Minister Rafik Hariri "saluted" Mr. Assad for discussing with Mr. Clinton an Israeli troop withdrawal from Lebanon.

available for possible Jordanian-American joint ventures, he said: "We're trying to put together American businessmen and women who are interested in joint venture opportunities, not only here in Jordan but also in the West Bank and Gaza and other parts of this region of the world."

Mr. Brown described anxiety to protect intellectual property rights — computer software, music and films etc., — against unauthorised commercialisation as a major concern of the U.S. and such practices were an impediment to closer commercial cooperation.

However, he said that during his talks in Saudi Arabia, where he began his Middle East visit Saturday, and in Jordan he found "an increased sensitivity on that issue and the importance" the U.S. attaches to that issue.

"The United States happens

to be a leader in technology, in telecommunications, in software, and therefore, there are great concerns from the creative individuals not only in the United States, but also around the world. These people want to ensure that creative endeavours are protected."

In an arrival statement, Mr. Brown said that the Clinton administration believes that Jordan had "tremendous potential for growth and development," and that the U.S. was "absolutely committed to finding ways to help our private sector and the Jordanian private sector work closely together."

Following are excerpts from Mr. Brown's arrival comments:

"Jordan's highly educated population, its strategic location, its progressive leadership all point to a nation poised for increased prosperity. When we add to this equation the possibility for lasting peace—which Jordan has helped to bring

both of our nations. And I believe our work this week will bring peace and stability to a region too long torn by the tragedies of war and poverty."

Mr. Brown, a leading figure in the American civil rights movement and a close associate of the late Martin Luther King, addressed a gathering organised by the World Affairs Council later Monday marking the birthday of Dr. King.

He also attended a meeting with businessmen organised by the Jordan Businessmen's Association before leaving for Israel.

JORDAN WELFARE LOTTERY

Special Issue No. 1/1994

Drawing of January 17, 1994

Wining Tickets

Holder of ticket No. 60059 B Wins JD 60,000	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 4,000 each wins JD 600
Holder of ticket No. 60059 A Wins JD 25,000	60050 60069 60159 61059 70059
Holder of ticket No. 72765 A B Wins JD 12,000	60058 60049 60959 69059 50059
Holder of ticket No. 19921 A B Wins JD 10,000	Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 1,000 each wins JD 100
Holder of ticket No. 74836 A B Wins JD 7,000	72766 72775 72845 73765 72765
Holder of ticket No. 39329 A B Wins JD 5,000	72764 72755 72645 71765 62765
Holder of ticket No. 06952 A B Wins JD 4,000	Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 1,000 each wins JD 100
Holder of ticket No. 20281 A B Wins JD 2,500	74837 74846 74936 75836 04836
Holder of ticket No. 20261 A B Wins JD 2,000	74835 74826 74736 73836 04836
Ticket numbers 70920 66111 68148 A B	Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 400 each wins JD 50
Ticket numbers 34970 67841 A B	06953 06962 06952 16952 06951 06942 06852 05952 76952

TICKETS ENDING WITH

8631 A B	Win JD 250 each	8536 A B	Win JD 100 each
027 A B	Win JD 50 each	83 A B	Win JD 15 each

COVER PRIZES FOR THE LOTTERY SELLERS

80 covers, attached to the stub of 10 ending in **056 882 261 653 743 A B** Win JD 20

Winners of the grand prizes in the special issue number 24 of January 2, 1994

Firas Muhannad Amman Student Hall First Grand Prize B JD 40,000
Muhammad Abo Amman Student Hall First Grand Prize B JD 40,000
Hussein Ali Zarqa Student Hall First Grand Prize A JD 15,000
Fayed Abu Salem Amman Student Hall First Grand Prize A JD 15,000
Ali Mohammad Al Masa'ideh Amman Student Hall First Grand Prize A JD 7,500
Mahmed Qasim Amman Student Hall First Grand Prize A JD 7,500

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مطلوب

مدير مصنع في إيطاليا

شركة صناعية رائدة في إيطاليا تطلب مدير
للمعاهدات التجارية :

Economy

JORDAN TIMES, TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1994 7

Syria plans \$1.3b plants to end power shortage

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria has approved construction of electricity plants costing \$1.3 billion to end rationing and meet increasing demands for power supplies, a senior official has said.

Zaki Odieh, director-general of Syria's Electricity Authority, told Reuters in an interview the plants would have the capacity to generate 2,828 megawatts.

Much of Syria, except for big industrial zones, suffered electricity cuts for over six hours a

day but this has now been reduced to between two to three hours daily.

"Rationing will be (further) reduced gradually and will be removed by the end of the year," Mr. Odieh said.

President Hafez Al Assad last September ordered fast action to solve the electricity shortages.

Mr. Odieh said new industrial and agricultural projects, and increased household use of electricity, including more air

conditioning units, lay behind the power shortages.

Hydro-electricity production at the Euphrates Dam, because of less water flowing in the Euphrates River from Tur-

key, and periodic overhauling of old electricity generation plants also played a role in reducing supplies.

Mr. Odieh said Italy's Fiat would build three plants consisting of eight gas-fed turbines to generate 1,028 megawatts. These would cost a total \$326 million.

The government of Kuwait and the Arab Fund for Arab Economic Development were helping to finance this, he said.

Construction had already begun and the first 128-megawatt turbine would come on stream in August and the rest in 16 months.

Japan's Mitsubishi, which won a \$48 million contract, had already begun work on a 600-megawatt combined-cycle plant. It was expected to complete the first gas-fed 200-megawatt unit in November. Mr. Odieh said.

He said the whole project was due to be completed in mid-march next year and was partly financed by Japan's capital.

Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund which contributed \$423 million.

Tests of a 200-megawatt Russian-built plant near Damascus had already begun and the \$140 million project was expected to come on stream also in March.

The electricity chief said overhaul and maintenance of existing plants carried out recently had also contributed to lifting electricity production.

Mr. Odieh said his authority had called tenders for building a 1,000-megawatt steam plant near the northern city of Aleppo. Saudi Arabia had pledged to contribute to financing the project and construction would start soon.

Syria had also reached an agreement with Lebanon this month for a 1,000-megawatt plant to be built in Lebanon which would feed both countries. He said committees were now discussing technical matters and construction would start soon.

Omanis urged to brace for job nationalisation

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Sultan Qaboos said his government was chalking out an intensive training programme for Omanis so they will replace foreigners, who began to stream in when oil was discovered around 10 years ago.

Other oil-rich Gulf states depend heavily on foreign labour, given a large shortage in skilled native labour. But they have joined Oman in launching campaigns to lessen reliance on expatriates, which they believe have become a threat to their security and conservative tribal society.

Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have the biggest percentage of foreigners, who have become a majority.

MUSCAT (AFP) — Oman's ruler, in a face-to-face chat with his people, has urged them not to be lazy and prepare to take over jobs from foreigners as the Gulf state presses on with a nationalisation drive.

Sultan Qaboos Ibn Saeed said around 400,000 jobs taken up by Asians and other expatriates were awaiting Omanis and asked local religious and tribal leaders to encourage young men to engage in work.

Sultan Qaboos said foreigners accounted for 26 percent of the population and the government wanted to cut the level to 10 per cent.

"It is time for serious work.

Let us work together to achieve that objective," he told Omanis in an outdoor meeting.

"I have information that the majority of Omanis are aged

15 years. This means that the youth are coming... there are at least 400,000 jobs occupied by expatriates and are awaiting the Omani youth."

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Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have the biggest percentage of foreigners, who have become a majority.

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At least 2 killed as Zulus enforce strike call in S. Africa

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Zulu supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) killed at least two people Monday and dragged township commuters from cars and taxis to enforce a strike call, police and witnesses said.

Unconfirmed reports said up to seven people died in beatings, shootings and stabbings in townships around Johannesburg as Zulus were called upon to skip work and greet their king in Pretoria.

About 15,000 Zulus, many dressed in tribal costumes and brandishing traditional weapons such as clubs and spears, gathered outside the government buildings in Pretoria. Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini and Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi began talks in the afternoon with President F.W. De Klerk to discuss Zulu demands for sovereignty after April elections.

Inkatha spokeswoman Suzanne Vos denied allegations of intimidation, calling them part of a "vicious, anti-Inkatha campaign" waged by Nelson Mandela's rival African National Congress (ANC). But a Zulu who is an ANC

supporter claimed he was forced to hide in a train toilet more than an hour to escape rampaging Inkatha supporters. "I realised I'm going to die," David Sibeko said after leaving the train in Pretoria. Sibeko, 33, said he was travelling from Soweto, outside Johannesburg, to work in the city. But he said he stayed on the train, cowering on the toilet floor all the way to Pretoria 60 kilometres (40 miles) away to avoid being attacked.

"They tried to push the (toilet) door. I put my back against the door, because I knew once I opened the door it was the end of my days," he said.

Despite being officially non-partisan, King Zwelithini is a crucial figure in Inkatha's political fight against ANC domination of the Zulu homeland of KwaZulu. Inkatha is dominated by Zulus, and King Zwelithini frequently shares the podium with Mr. Buthelezi at rallies.

Four hundred Zulus brandishing spears and axes marched in front of ANC headquarters in downtown Johannesburg, and small bands fanned out through the central business district, frightening away street vendors for the day.



An unidentified man, stabbed in the face, flees into alleys in Alexander, a shanty town north of Johannesburg as Zulus clash with township residents trying to get to work (AFP photo)

Police Lt. Deon Peens said two men were beaten to death in the townships of Actonville and Daveyton, east of Johannesburg, in a "campaign of intimidation" aimed at forcing Zulus to go to Pretoria. The bodies of five people with bullet wounds were found in Vosloorus, south of Johannesburg, and police were investigating whether the murders were related to the Zulu strike.

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Lebanon praises Geneva summit as breakthrough

EIRUT (Agencies) — Lebanon on Monday hailed the Geneva summit between U.S. President Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad as bringing the Middle East a step closer to peace.

Prime Minister Rafik Hariri said Sunday's summit was "historic" and praised Mr. Assad's stand.

The summit "opens a new page which we expect will lead to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace," Mr. Hariri told reporters.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher telephoned Mr. Hariri after the summit to brief him on the meeting, stressing that Lebanon was discussed at length in Geneva.

South Lebanon is the last battle line between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Twenty-five Israeli soldiers were killed there last year in bomb attacks and clashes with guerrillas.

Mr. Hariri told Beirut Radio that Mr. Assad raised the issue of U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 of 1978 which calls for Israeli withdrawal from its 15-kilometres wide occupation zone in the south.

He said he felt "great relief" at the positions Mr. Assad took during the summit.

"I salute President Assad who included 425 in the order of the day of this historic summit," Mr. Hariri said.

The subject of the Israeli invasion of the south took a major part of the negotiations, he added.

Lebanese and Israeli negotiations have made no known progress on working out terms for an Israeli withdrawal from the south at 11 rounds of Middle East peace talks in Washington.

Bad weather brings lull in Kabul fighting

KABUL (Agencies) — Warning factions shelled each other sporadically Monday, but slow, rain and freezing temperatures eased the intense battle for the capital, that began Jan. 1.

Rival parties worked behind the scenes to arrange a ceasefire, but no progress was reported.

Bad weather has slowed the fighting on several occasions since the warfare broke out 17 days ago between President Burhanuddin Rabbani's forces and the main rivals, Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and warlord Rashid Dostum.

However, clear weather inevitably brings heavier fighting. Full-scale battles, compete with air strikes and heavy shelling, are expected to resume when the weather improves.

Some 45 military commanders who belong to smaller parties and are largely independent of the three main factions, have joined forces to try to arrange a truce.

Iryani quits Yemeni cabinet over census

SANA (Agencies) — Yemeni Planning and Development Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani, an influential northernner, has quit his post — the first ministerial resignation of an acute political crisis between north and south.

Yemen's two main political parties have been feuding for months and accuse each other of massing troops along the border which divided north and south into separate states until 1990.

But the issue which sparked Mr. Iryani's departure was a national census, due to be completed in five days time, the northern newspaper Al Mithaq reported Monday.

Prime Minister Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas, a southerner, has scrapped the count and Mr. Iryani, a former foreign minister and a supporter of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, resigned in protest, Al Mithaq said.

The Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), which is headed by Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh and rules the south before unification, accused Mr. Saleh's General People Congress (GPC) on Sunday of moving troops towards the former borders and smuggling weapons into the south.

Mr. Saleh's party responded that the charges were a cover up of the YSP's own troop movements towards the former border. The two parties are nominal-

ly Jour daily stressed that the Geneva summit was a turning point.

The Clinton-Assad meeting marks a turning-point in the evolution of peace efforts, even if it is still a long way before a new Middle East can take shape," Issa Goraieb said.

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Assad called for a "peace of the brave" in 1994.

Lebanon and Syria are expected to return to the negotiating table with Israel next week.

Lebanon insists at Middle East peace negotiations that Israel withdraw from the south in accordance with Resolution 425 and says the Lebanese army will then establish security in the south, disarming guerrillas and preventing further attacks on Israel.

But Israel and the United States want an agreement on security arrangements before the Israelis agree to withdraw.

"We request that the U.N. secretary-general authorise such strikes without delay," Dr. Alagib said.

Foreign Minister Farek Bouez said "the principle of a comprehensive peace, which both Lebanon and Syria have repeatedly called for, has been adopted in Geneva."

"A clear signal that agreement was reached at least on major issues" emerged from the summit, Mr. Bouez said.

Lebanon's leading newspaper agreed.

"Up until yesterday Syria was the problem but today, after the Geneva meeting, it is the solution," wrote Giassan Tueni, a veteran politician and owner of Al Nahar newspaper.

Under a banner headline reading the "Lion's share" — a reference to Mr. Assad who name in Arabic means lion — the editor-in-chief of L'Orient-

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin accepted the resignation of his top economic reformer Monday.

The resignation on Sunday of Yegor Gaidar, first deputy prime minister and architect of Russia's market reforms, stunned political circles and put the trouble into a tailspin.

Mr. Gaidar's departure was seen as a severe blow to his planned reform programme and could be followed by those of a number of other key reformers in his government.

Mr. Yeltsin paid tribute in a statement to Mr. Gaidar's "courage and his contribution to the advance of economic reforms" and expressed "understanding for the arguments and reasons which led him to submit his resignation."

In accepting Mr. Gaidar's departure, the Russian leader stressed "his unshakable commitment to democratic reforms of Russian society, its economy and its political institutions."

The London-based human rights organisation also urged the Jordanian authorities to commute death sentences handed down against three of the men by the military tribunal on Sunday. Seven others received long jail terms.

Amnesty, which had observers at the trial, said it was particularly concerned at the lengthy pre-trial detention of the defendants, allegations of torture during this time and lack of access to doctors of their choice.

Hospital officials in Kabul say at least 7,000 people have been wounded and hundreds have been killed this month. Also, at least 50,000 residents have fled the battered city.

Shelling forced cabinet ministers to shift a scheduled meeting from the prime minister's palace, in central Kabul, to the Intercontinental Hotel in the safer western suburbs.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the continued practice of prolonged incommunicado detention in Jordan, as it facilitates torture and ill-treatment and compromises the right of a fair trial.

Amnesty said the lack of what it called fundamental safeguards during pre-trial detention also cast doubt on the validity of any statements or confessions given by detainees.

The defendants retracted their confessions in court, saying they had been made under torture whilst they were incommunicado.

If the authorities have nothing to hide, it would be in their interest to introduce such basic and long-overdue safeguards," Amnesty said.

The 10 men were convicted of a plot to kill the King during a cadets' graduation ceremony at Muia University last June.

Political sources said that Mr. Attas told Mr. Iryani the census, on which \$25 million has been spent, was not being carried out in a professional way and was badly timed because of the political crisis.

The north has a much bigger population than the south.

Political sources said the census result could have fuelled the fears of southern leaders of domination by the north.

Differences between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beedh have paralysed the government machinery, caused serious economic problems and raised concern about the viability of the country, one of the Arab World's poorest.

An all-party national dialogue committee trying since November to bridge the gap between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beedh is expected to come up with recommendations for a settlement.

The committee told the two feuding leaders last week to settle their differences by Tuesday lest the political and economic crisis split the country once again.

The local currency, the Yemeni rial, has dropped sharply against the U.S. dollar since the beginning of the year, sending the prices of staple items rocketing.

Appearing to reject the treaty, he sent word through an

side that the SNA would not comment on it "because it was not a political issue, only an agreement reached at a traditional clan gathering."

SNA supporters Abdi Abshir Kahiye said the clans could settle "small, local issues like punishing criminals," but their authority did not extend to "big political questions."

The treaty, hammered out by 176 clan elders and religious leaders in three days of talks, calls for the clans to live in peace, end the division of Mogadishu and return property looted during the civil war.

But the two warlords themselves neither signed the agreement nor attended the talks, reserved for clan elders and closed to politicians.

A vicious power struggle still divides the two men whose fighters gutted Mogadishu in four months of carnage before the first U.S. marines landed in

the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

But in a sign that peace may

still be a distant prospect, Mr. Ali Mahdi denied SNA offi-

OIC urges U.N. to authorise air strikes

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Roman Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem Michael Sabbah Monday dismissed criticism over the Dec. 30 agreement on mutual recognition between Israel and the Vatican

saying that the church should not be absent from the scene at this crucial juncture in the region's history.

Foreign ministers from leading nations of the OIC met here with Dr. Ghali to urge the U.N. to follow through on a pledge at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) summit.

"We hope that this NATO declaration will not be construed as an empty threat and that it will not be the subject of procedural wrangling," said OIC Secretary General Hamid Alagib.

"We request that the U.N. secretary-general authorise such strikes without delay," Dr. Alagib said.

Israel wants the formation of a joint commission with Lebanon to work out security arrangements but Beirut says the Israelis must leave first.

Diplomats in Beirut call the guerrillas "quite a force to be reckoned with" and say they do not trust the Hezbollah movement to refrain from attacks on Israel after Israeli troops pull out.

The United States and Israel believe that Syria holds the key to giving Israel the security guarantees in South Lebanon that it demands.

They say no arms or supplies can reach Hezbollah without Syria's agreement and Syrian troops could cut off supplies and disarm the guerrillas if Damascus gives the order.

government policy, in particular decisions to bring Belarus into the trouble zone and to build a new \$500 million parliament building.

"I cannot be in the government and opposed to it at the same time," he said.

Russia's Choice, the party which Mr. Gaidar led in December ballots, said in a statement that the government "is progressively moving away from policies of stabilisation and reform, despite its declared faith in this placy."

It said Mr. Gaidar's departure had been the "only possible measure" he could take.

Yeltsin spokesman Viacheslav Kostikov said Mr. Gaidar's departure would "seriously weaken the reformist wing" of Mr. Yeltsin's administration.

He added that Mr. Yeltsin would meet Prime Minister Yevgeny Chernenko Tuesday to discuss the make-up of the government's programme following Mr. Gaidar's resignation.

Legislators and reform-minded economist Grigory Yavlinsky, mentioned as a possible Gaidar successor, said Mr. Gaidar's departure would have little effect because he has long been a figurehead with no real power.

Mr. Yeltsin said the reform policy would continue "in line with Russia's national and strategic interests."

First Deputy Premier Gaidar announced his resignation Sunday, citing differences with

two years.

Some parties have expressed doubts about the weight being given to the conference, believing that there are other ways of finding a solution.

Removing army chiefs from the central committee of the FLN in 1989 marked the start of the transition from one-party state to multi-party democracy.

Amnesty said the lack of what it called fundamental safeguards during pre-trial detention also cast doubt on the validity of any statements or confessions given by detainees.

The defendants retracted their confessions in court, saying they had been made under torture whilst they were incommunicado.

If the authorities have nothing to hide, it would be in their interest to introduce such basic and long-overdue safeguards," Amnesty said.

The latest victim, 45-year-old French consul employee Monique Arafat, was shot dead in Algiers on Saturday, the 26th foreigner and fourth French national to be killed

since late September.

Some 50 Islamic fundamentalists have been freed from a detention centre at Ain M'lila in the far south, where they were held for more than a year, the Al Watan daily reported Monday.

Further releases were expected within coming weeks, the newspaper said.

The move was announced last week by the spokesman of the National Dialogue Commission (CDN), Abdul Kader Benslah, at the behest of political parties due to meet in the national conference.

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